

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR	REPORT NO.		25X1
SUBJECT	Soviet Medical Examination of Recruits for the Armed Forces	DATE DISTR.	12 August 1953	
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	3	
PLACE ACQUIRED		REQUIREMENT NO.		25X1
		REFERENCES		

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2. According to the regulations then prevailing, every prospective draftee in the USSR had to undergo two medical examinations in his respective Voenkomat or Rayvovenkomat. Both of the medical boards were generally composed of several medical doctors who specialized in internal diseases, surgery, ENT, eye, neuropathology, skin, VD, X-ray, and stomatology.
- a. A pre-induction medical examination was conducted when the prospective draftee first registered with the Voenkomat (Vzyat na Uchët). How much time elapsed between registration and the date one was drafted varied considerably,

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depending on how badly the armed forces needed recruits and the administrative difficulties involved. As a general rule, it may be stated that this period was somewhere between 6 and 12 months. The pre-induction medical examination was of a general character, the purpose being to determine general fitness of prospective draftees for military service. This examination consisted of examining the body structure in order to discover possible physical defects, making a record of weight and height, a chest X-ray, a check of hearing and eyesight, and a check for VD. Youngsters with evident physical defects were rejected right away, either permanently or for a period of one or several years. Those with minor defects were qualified as fit for non-combat duty (Goden k Nestroyevoy Sluzhbe), and all others who were found fit were qualified for combat duty (Goden k Stroyevoy Sluzhbe). In other words, the pre-induction medical examination board facilitated the task of the medical induction board, which conducted the examination when a recruit was actually drafted. The pre-induction military medical examination board prepared a complete card file on all prospective recruits.

- b. The induction medical examination was conducted when the recruits were inducted by their Voenkomats (Prizvan na Deystvitel'nyu Voinskuyu Sluzhbu). To this examination were summoned all those who had been qualified by their pre-induction boards as fit for combat or non-combat duty. The medical examination was more detailed than the pre-induction examination and had a two-fold purpose:

- (1) To check and to elaborate on the decision as to the fitness of recruits as it had been determined by the pre-induction medical board. Quite often the induction medical board revised the decision made by the pre-induction board and reclassified some recruits from combat to non-combat duty or vice versa. No blood or urine analyses were made unless there was some indication that an ailment existed; in such cases, recruits were sent for a special analysis examination to the nearest military hospital or polyclinic. Decisions of the military medical installations were then binding.
- (2) To determine fitness of recruits for duty with different branches of the armed forces and services within those branches. Since here not only physical fitness but also personnel requirements of the War and Naval Ministries were to be considered, this work was done in close cooperation with the military-plenipotentiary board (Voyenno-Mandatnaya Komissiya). This board was composed of two sections: a military section consisting of military personnel familiar in detail with the military legislation and requirements set by the ministries for individual branches, arms, and services; and a civilian section composed of representatives of the MVD, attorney general's office (Prokuratura), and local party authorities. The general task of this section was to decide recruits' reliability and fitness for certain services in the light of social and educational background, biography, police record, political affiliations, and political activity.

3. It was quite customary to ask a recruit his preference of military services. However, except in cases of some undoubtedly reliable youngsters (outstanding komсомol members or activists) these requests were practically never granted. [redacted] the general tendency of the board was not to grant such requests, but

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deliberately to prevent their realization in compliance with an established policy in the USSR not to grant any individual requests, since, "If the man is requesting something, there is certainly some personal interest in it which most probably is contrary to the interest of the State."

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[redacted] very often the Voyenkomat military medical examination boards and "Mandatnyy" boards did not comply with the requirements set by the War and Naval Ministries for physical fitness and educational background for the various branches of service. For instance, if the breakdown for a particular Voyenkomat called for a larger number of recruits for the navy than was actually available in the induction class, both boards would deliberately overlook some physical requirements and assign to the navy some recruits who really did not meet naval standards. More than that, sometimes recruits who were told they were assigned, for example, to mechanized units would suddenly be shipped to the navy without any notice.

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[redacted] in addition to the two Voyenkomat military medical examination boards, the navy also maintained a third one. Recruits assigned to naval commands had to appear before this naval medical examination board, which on the basis of physical fitness would assign them to various branches within the navy. The composition of this board was similar to that of the Voyenkomat medical board, except for the omission of a surgeon. Special attention was given to hearing, eyesight (both for various types of signal and communication service), chest X-rays, and general body structure. Recruits with small chest expansion and slim body structure were reserved for submarine service. Those that were stout with strong body structure and developed chests were assigned to torpedo boat units. Recruits in the best physical condition were reserved for the naval aviation service.

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